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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/030,728	01/11/2002	Michiyo Matsushita	SHC0165	8252
7590	03/31/2004			
Michael S Gzybowski Baker & Daniels Suite 800 111 East Wayne Street Fort Wayne, IN 46802			EXAMINER TORRES VELAZQUEZ, NORCA LIZ	
			ART UNIT 1771	PAPER NUMBER
DATE MAILED: 03/31/2004				

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/030,728

Applicant(s)

MATSUSHITA ET AL.

Examiner

Norca L. Torres-Velazquez

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 23 December 2003.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1 and 4-11 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1 and 4-11 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 11 January 2002 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

Response to Arguments

1. Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 1 and 4-10 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

a. Applicant's arguments, see communication filed December 23, 2003, with respect to the MATHIS et al. reference have been fully considered and are persuasive. The rejection of claims 1, 4-5 and 7-10 over MATHIS et al. has been withdrawn. Applicants argued that MATHIS et al. does not teach nor provide for the middle breathable layer being anything other than a film layer. The rejection has been withdrawn in view of Applicants amendment that requires the breathable liquid-impervious sheet of the composite sheet to be a fibrous layer. MATHIS et al. teaches the use of a middle film layer and does not provide teachings to the use of other alternatives such as a fibrous material.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

2. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter, which the applicant regards as his invention.

Claims 4 and 5 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. It is noted that the breathability of both the continuous thermoplastic synthetic fibers and the breathable liquid-impervious sheet are dependent on the specific composition and construction of the materials. *Ex parte Slob*, 157 USPQ 172, states the following with regard to an article claimed by defining property values:

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Claims merely setting forth physical characteristics desired in article, and not setting forth specific compositions which would meet such characteristics, are invalid as vague, indefinite, and functional since they cover any conceivable combination of ingredients either presently existing or which might be discovered in future and which would impart desired characteristics; thus expression "a liquefiable substance having a liquefaction temperature from about 40°C. to about 300°C. and being compatible with the ingredients in the powdered detergent composition" is too broad and indefinite since it purports to cover everything which will perform the desired functions regardless of its composition, and, in effect, recites compounds by what it is desired that they do rather than what they are; expression also is too broad since it appears to read upon materials that could not possibly be used to accomplish purposes intended.

Thus, claims 4 and 5 are indefinite for reciting only the desired physical properties of the continuous fibers and the breathable liquid-impervious sheet, rather than setting forth structural and/or chemical characteristics of said materials.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102/103

3. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

(e) the invention was described in a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention thereof by the applicant for patent, or on an international application by another who has fulfilled the requirements of paragraphs (1), (2), and (4) of section 371(c) of this title before the invention thereof by the applicant for patent.

The changes made to 35 U.S.C. 102(e) by the American Inventors Protection Act of 1999 (AIPA) and the Intellectual Property and High Technology Technical Amendments Act of 2002 do not apply when the reference is a U.S. patent resulting directly or indirectly from an international application filed before November 29, 2000. Therefore, the prior art date of the reference is determined under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) prior to the amendment by the AIPA (pre-AIPA 35 U.S.C. 102(e)).

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4. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

5. Claims 1 and 6-10 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as anticipated by or, in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as obvious over WELCHEL et al. (US 6,286,145 B1).

WELCHEL et al. discloses a breathable composite barrier fabric that includes a low-strength nonwoven web 12, a high-strength nonwoven web 14 and a barrier layer 16 positioned between the layers 12 and 14. (Column 8, lines 62-67) The reference teaches that the barrier layer may be a polyolefin *meltblown* web having a basis weight of at least about 10 gsm. The reference also teaches that the barrier may also be a breathable film. (Column 7, lines 29-36) The reference further teaches that desirably, the material used in the nonwoven webs 12 and/or 14 has a basis weight between about 30 gsm and about 140 gsm. (Column 12, lines 10-14) The reference teaches the use of polyethylene or polypropylene in the barrier layer, and the use of polyethylene or polypropylene fiber components in the nonwoven webs 12 and 14. (Column 9, lines 18-30)

The layers of the breathable composite barrier fabric are joined by thermal bonding techniques such as, for example, conventional hot calendaring, ultrasonic bonding, point bonding, hot air techniques, radiant heating, infrared heating and the like. (Column 7, lines 46-50) WELCHEL et al. further teaches that when employing breathable barrier layers it is desired that the bond area is less than about 50% of the surface area of the laminate, and, more desirably, from about 5 to about 30% of the surface area. (Column 12, lines 59-62)

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Although WELCHER et al. does not explicitly teach the claimed breathability and water resistance it is reasonable to presume that the claimed breathability and water resistance are inherent to the breathable composite barrier fabric of WELCHER et al. Support for said presumption is found in the use of like materials (i.e. meltblown barrier layer attached to spunbonded nonwoven layer(s) by spot bonding, the nonwoven webs made from thermoplastic fibers). The burden is upon Applicant to prove otherwise. *In re Fitzgerald* 205 USPQ 594. In addition, the presently claimed property of breathability of about 200 sec/100cc and a water resistance of at least about 300 mm would obviously have been present one the WELCHER et al. product is provided. Note *In re Best*, 195 USPQ at 433, footnote 4 (CCPA 1977) as to the providing of this rejection made above under 35 USC 102.

6. Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the date of this final action.

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7. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Norca L. Torres-Velazquez whose telephone number is 571-272-1484. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Thursday 8:00-4:00 pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Terrel Morris can be reached on 571-272-1478. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

Norca L. Torres-Velazquez
Examiner
Art Unit 1771

March 16, 2004


ELIZABETH M. COLE
PRIMARY EXAMINER